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AUTHOR	Hanson, Ralph A.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This document reports on the quality assurance aspects of the tryout of three SWRL (Southwest Regional Laboratory) Communication Skills Programs: Reading, Composition, and Expressive Language. The sample population was both large and diverse, and a pattern of high proficiency was achieved both within program blocks or levels and across program outcomes. Although placement of pupils in the ordered levels did show indications of being influenced by biosocial characteristics, pupil performance in the program appeared strong against pupil and school characteristics popularly believed to make for an instructional "disadvantage." This document describes in detail the biosocial characteristics of the population, the level outcome proficiency, and the outcome proficiency by user characteristics for all three communication skills programs. (TS)

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SWRL COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROGRAMS: QUALITY ASSURANCE INFORMATION FOR THE 1973-74 ACADEMIC YEAR

Ralph A. Hanson, George E. Behr, and Jerry D. Bailey

ABSTRACT

Program experience data are presented related to pupil proficiencies on program outcomes for Reading, Composition, and Expressive Language. A generally high pattern of proficiency was achieved both within program blocks or levels and across program outcomes. The patterns are discussed in the context of biosocial characteristics popularly believed to make for instructional "disadvantages."

CS202 781

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SWRL COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROGRAMS: QUALITY ASSURANCE INFORMATION FOR THE 1973-74 ACADEMIC YEAR

Ralph A. Hanson, George E. Behr, and Jerry D. Bailey

Quality Assurance (QA) aspects of the tryout of three SWRL Communication Skills Programs (CSP), Reading, Composition and Expressive Language, were architected during the 1973-74 academic year to provide basic information in several areas. One area involved obtaining further program experience data related to pupil proficiency on program outcomes. Another involved obtaining data related to instructional pacing considerations in terms of temporal and qualitative indicators. The data presented in this present report are augmented by information from the 1973-74 exercise of the SWRL Instructional Management System (IMS) that used these CSPs as instructional vehicles; these data will be reported in a separate document.

The tryout also served as a vehicle for development of the Quality Assurance Information System for CSP. Development of this system was projected to parallel the development of other CSP systems. In the first year, 1973-74, the emphasis was on verifying a strategy for placement and block assessments using a single program. The second year, 1974-75, focuses on the revision and extension of this strategy to the other CSPs and the initial implementation of the QA Information Reports. The third year, 1975-76, will be used to exercise and verify all aspects of the QA Information Service for the Elementary CSPs. Subsequent tryouts will couple the QA Information Service to the Advanced Programs.

A basic issue in the development of a QA system concerns the provisions made for obtaining and providing useful information on student placement and outcome proficiency. The 1973-74 tryout focused on these instrumentation requirements for the SWRL Reading Program. Specifically, the tryout provided the vehicle for the design and development of new program placement and assessment procedures for Reading. At the same time, prototypic assessment materials for the Expressive Language and Composition Programs were exercised.

All assessments were constructed to provide a means for crediting pupil proficiency on each major program outcome. The assessment materials were delivered in time to be administered to program pupils at the close of the school year, and schedules relating assessment forms to program use accompanied the assessments.

For the Reading Program, individual pupil booklets presenting objective items were used. Four overlapping assessment measures, each

spanning three blocks,[1] were used, and the single measure administered to a pupil was determined by the pupil's most recent block of instruction.

For the Expressive Language Program, a teacher rating scale was developed for each of the four levels of the program. The teacher rated each pupil over the outcomes identified for a level.

For the Composition Program, individual pupil booklets for each level were used in which the directions instructed pupils to write brief productions. Teachers then rated these productions according to instructions provided as part of the assessment materials.

PROCEDURES

The Programs were installed in participating districts following procedures consistent with their projected installation under commercial distribution. The tryout period spanned the full academic year. Briefly, the following events took place:

1. A district level coordinator/trainer received orientation and training at SWRL in late summer (August). This person was to be responsible for training teachers and other staff in their district using the programs, monitoring report form distribution, collecting report forms, and maintaining liaison with SWRL.

2. The coordinator distributed Program Participation Sheets to teachers within the district. This Sheet indicates the teacher's name and number of pupils beginning instruction in each block or level of each applicable program. Completed Participation Sheets were returned to SWRL via the coordinator.

3. Based on the information on the Program Participation Sheet, assessments and supporting materials were custom packaged by SWRL for each teacher. The packets were distributed to teachers via district coordinators prior to the end of the school year. Following administration, pupil booklets and ratings were collected by the district coordinator and returned to SWRL.

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[1] The designations of "block," "level," and "grade" can be distinguished roughly as follows:

Grade	K	1	2	3
Block	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8
Level	1	2	3	4

Program use is not contingent upon age or grade but on the proficiency status of pupils. The CSPs may be started at any primary grade, and more than one "level" or two "blocks" may be completed during one school year.

4. Other data were supplied by teachers at the end of the year. For each participating pupil, the following data items were collected:
    a. End-of-year program level or block.
    b. End-of-year unit.
    c. Total number of program units completed.
    d. Outcome scores or ratings of the last Criterion Exercise (CE) administered to the pupil in the normal course of program use.
    e. Typicality index--teacher's indication of the representativeness of the pupil's last CE results.

    The first three items provide the basis for relating end-of-year student performance outcomes to the quantity of instruction received. The last two items were collected to determine if single CE results were accurate estimates of program performance. Subsequent analysis indicated that single CE's cannot be used without considering the typicality index. Therefore, these last two data items are not treated in the remainder of this report.

5. For each school, the following data items were collected via a School Information Sheet completed by the district coordinator:
    a. Ethnic composition (Black, Spanish-surnamed, Other).
    b. Income level composition (less than $5,000, 5,000-8,000, 8,000-12,000, greater than $12,000).
    c. Standardized reading test experience (at, above, or below national norms).
    d. ESEA Title I eligibility (Yes, No).
    e. Program duration (the number of weeks each applicable program was used in the school).

6. Following receipt of the materials at SWRL, the data were keypunched and loaded for computer processing. After several data cleaning steps, pupil level data were collapsed to form a school level data base. Thus, the data points--program outcome performance, pacing, and demographic measures--used in subsequent analyses sections are school level indicators.

Because the source data for the analysis were collected over a long period of time, the number of schools and pupils providing information on each component varies somewhat. This occurs for a variety of reasons--data components are misplaced in districts, partially or incorrectly completed, etc. As a result, the actual number of schools providing information on any given variable ranged from 1 to 102. There is no indication that these varying N's were systematic, and therefore they should not affect the findings or conclusions.

PARTICIPANTS

The total tryout participants involved 128 schools from 20 districts--16 in California, 1 in Texas, 1 in Nevada, and 2 in Florida. In describing these users, two kinds of data are utilized. Biosocial descriptors of the pupils attending a school, based on responses to the School Information Sheet, and patterns of program usage within a school, based on data from pupils and teachers.

Biosocial Characteristics

The descriptive information on the ethnic/racial composition of tryout schools is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Ethnic/Racial Composition of 102 Tryout Schools

Ethnic/Racial Group	Percent of Group within Schools				
	less than 19%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-100%
Black	91	6	0	3	2
Spanish-surnamed	75	13	10	1	3
Other	8	4	10	18	62

In subsequent portions of this document, entire schools are classified as belonging to one of the three ethnic/racial classifications--Black, Spanish-surnamed, and Other. The classification rule is simply that if more than 50% of a school's pupils are from one particular ethnic/racial group, the entire school is so classified. Schools in which no ethnic/racial group constitutes more than 50% of the school are not used in those subsequent analyses invclving ethnic/racial characteristics. Using this criterion, of the 100 schools classified, 5 are categorized as Black, 11 as Spanish-surnamed, 84 in the Other category, and 2 were unclassifiable.

Data on the income level of families, status in terms of national reading norms, and eligibility for ESEA Title I funds are provided in Table 2. The sample as a whole was somewhat above average in terms of their prior achievement record. However, sufficient variability is included to tap the range of school characteristics on these indicators.

Table 2

Distribution of Average Family Income, Status on Reading Tests, and Eligibility for ESEA Title I Funds for Tryout Schools

Average Family Income			Status on Reading Tests			Eligibility for ESEA Title I Funds		
	Schools			Schools			Schools	
Category	No.	%	Category	No.	%	Category	No.	%
<$5,000	8	8	below	28	29	Yes	19	19
5,000-8,000	16	16	at	20	20	No	82	81
8,000-12,000	41	40	above	50	51	Total	101	100
>12,000	37	36	Total	98	100			
Total	102	100						

Patterns of Program Use

The combinations of program use are presented in Table 3. Approximately half (51.4%) of the schools used one program, one-third (34.7%)

Table 3

Combinations of Program Use

	Number of Schools		Percent of Schools	
One Program - Reading	17		23.6	
Expressive Language	9		12.5	
Composition	11		15.3	
Subtotal		37		51.4
Two Programs - Reading, Exp. Lang.	1		1.4	
Reading, Comp.	7		9.7	
Exp. Lang, Comp.	17		23.6	
Subtotal		25		34.7
Three Programs - Reading, Exp. Lang., Composition	10		13.9	
Subtotal		10		13.9
Grand Total		72		100.0

used two programs, and the remaining one-sixth (13.9%) used all three programs. In the two program category, the Expressive Language and Composition combination accounted for more than two-thirds of the participants.

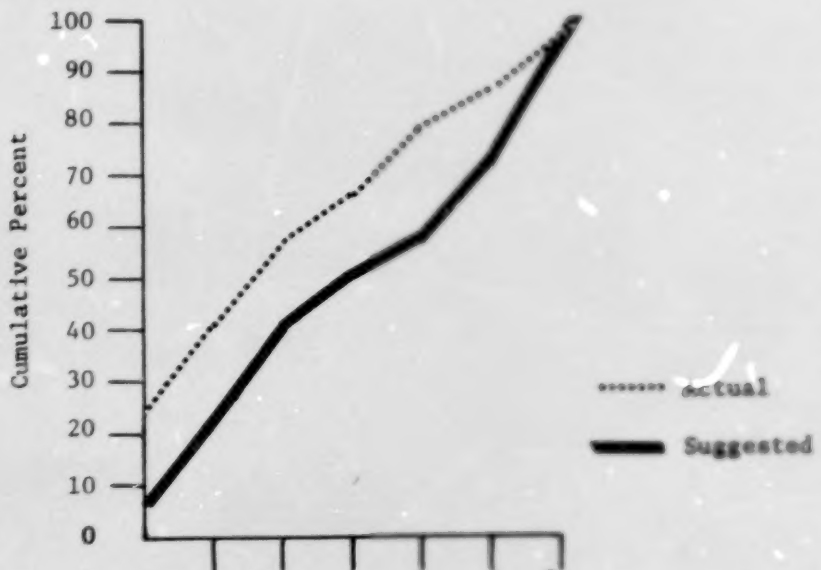
READING PROGRAM

Reading Program users provided information on three aspects of program use: placement, extent of use during the school year, and outcome proficiency after the completion of instruction. Data on each of these aspects are presented in the following sections.

Placement

Schools using the SWRL Reading Program typically began participation by administering a Placement Aid to classes during Spring, 1973. This instrument was designed to generate user reports of recommended placement (by block) for each school. These reports were used to estimate the quantity of instructional materials from each block that would be needed by the school.

Data were available on the results of the administration of this initial version of the Reading Placement Aid for 34 schools. These data were compared with the end-of-year data to examine actual pupil placement decisions by teachers relative to suggested pupil placement had the Aid been used as the sole basis for the placement decisions. The comparison of these data sets reveal some interesting patterns (see Figure 1 and Table 4).



Block	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Actual	24	40	57	66	78	86	98
Suggested	7	22	41	51	58	73	100

Cummulative Percent

Figure 1. Actual and suggested placement of pupils in the Reading Program in 34 schools.

Table 4

Actual and Suggested Reading Block Placement Distribution in Percent

Biosocial Characteristic	Actual* Suggested	Program Entry Points 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean Entry Point
ETHNICITY									
Black	A	47	21	23	9	0	0	0	1.9
(N = 3)**	S	16	13	28	15	10	12	6	3.5
Spanish-surnamed	A	31	34	34	0	0	0	0	2.0
(N = 1)	S	14	12	29	15	9	12	10	3.7
Other	A	19	16	15	10	14	9	16	3.8
(N = 20)	S	4	14	17	10	6	16	33	4.7
INCOME LEVEL									
Less than $5,000	A	67	22	11	0	0	0	0	1.4
(N = 1)	S	15	16	32	10	9	11	7	3.4
5,000 - 8,000	A	38	23	24	8	2	3	2	2.3
(N = 4)	S	13	13	26	15	9	13	12	3.8
8,000 - 12,000	A	21	17	22	15	9	5	11	3.3
(N = 9)	S	6	18	17	8	7	16	28	4.5
Greater than $12,000	A	16	15	10	7	18	12	20	4.2
(N = 11)	S	3	11	17	12	6	16	36	5.0
NATIONAL READING NORMS									
Below	A	26	23	31	15	1	0	4	2.6
(N = 6)	S	12	15	22	13	9	14	16	4.0
At	A	36	16	7	9	13	3	15	3.2
(N = 4)	S	7	17	22	9	7	16	23	4.4
Above	A	19	15	13	8	15	11	16	3.9
(N = 15)	S	4	13	18	10	6	15	35	4.9
TITLE I ELIGIBILITY									
Eligible (YES)	A	34	25	29	10	0	0	2	2.3
(N = 6)	S	13	14	24	13	9	14	14	3.9
Not eligible (NO)	A	20	15	13	10	15	10	17	3.8
(N = 19)	S	4	14	18	10	6	15	33	4.8

* Actual placement distributions may total less than 100% since pupils actually placed in Block 8 are not included in this table. This was done to conform to the seven entry points, Blocks 1-7, provided by the placement test.

** Number of Schools

Actual placement was calculated for each pupil by counting backwards from the pupil's indicated end-of-year unit the total number of units of instruction on which the pupil received instruction during the year. Suggested placement refers to the block entry point indicated by pupil performance on the placement instrument. The proportion of pupils within a school by block entry point--blocks 1 through 7--provides the school level data items. The average proportion across applicable schools for each block entry point constitute the data entries.

These data provide several important kinds of information about the program and its use by teachers. They indicate first that the program addresses the range of skill proficiency displayed by pupils in the tryout. The actual and suggested patterns of placement exhibit a large degree of similarity that is well illustrated in Figure 1.

Second, pupils tend to be placed in lower blocks than those suggested by their performance on the placement instrument. In Figure 1, the consistently higher evaluation of the cumulative actual placement relative to the cumulative suggested placement clearly reveals this phenomena. When actual versus suggested placement distributions are subdivided by school characteristics (Table 4), this underplacement phenomenon is highlighted:

1. Though under-placement occurs in all ethnicity categories, it is particularly pronounced in the Black and Spanish-surnamed categories.

2. The under-placement phenomenon appears to be related to income levels. Under-placement decreases as income levels increase.

3. The under-placement phenomenon is inversely related to the ordered categories of school histories in prior years on standardized reading tests.

4. Schools eligible for ESEA Title I assistance show greater under-placement than those schools not eligible.

Assessment Structure

Four assessment measures, A-D, were constructed to measure prespecified reading outcomes. As shown in Figure 2 and Table 5, each measure spanned several blocks of reading instruction and, except for A, overlapped its predecessor. Further, to obtain data over a larger item pool than a single form would provide, three forms of each measure were prepared--i.e., A1, A2 and A3. Within each measure and block, items were stratified by instructional unit. A list of the outcomes

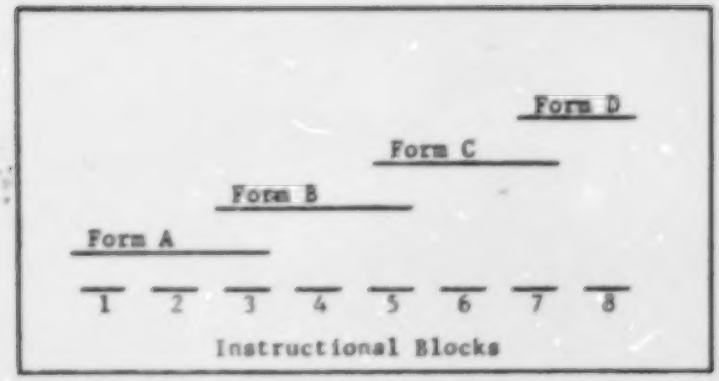


Figure 2. Instructional blocks covered by each End-of-Year Reading Assessment.

Table 5

Reading Assessment Administration Schedule

Assessment Form	Pupil's Last Instruction
A1, A2, or A3	Blocks 1 or 2
B1, B2, or B3	Blocks 3 or 4
C1, C2, or C3	Blocks 5 or 6
D1, D2, or D3	Blocks 7 or 8

assessed in each block is presented in Table 6. A brief description of each outcome is also presented.

Table 6

Block Outcomes Assessed for SWRL Reading

Block	Outcome[a]					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1	X	X	X	X		
2		X	X	X		
3		X	X	X		
4		X	X	X		
5			X		X	X
6			X		X	X
7			X		X	X
8			X		X	X

[a] I. Letter Names: Identifies upper and lower case letters.

II. Letter Sounds & Blending: Combines taught letter sounds and blending skills to decode and read new words.

III. Storybook Words: Reads words which have been instructed in the program storybooks.

IV. Sentence Comprehension: Reads and understands the meaning of sentences.

V. Vocabulary Extension: Reads new words that have graphemic or morphemic relationships to known words.

VI. Paragraph Comprehension: Reads and understands the meaning of paragraphs.

With the possible exception of Form D, the test administration schedule (Table 5) assures that pupils receive items from domains for which they have not yet received instruction. This procedure yielded data that were subsequently used to assist item selection in the development of the 1974-75 Reading Placement Assessment. A discussion of the item statistics so yielded is not within the focus of this document. However, it should be noted that the assessments were constructed to reflect the item domains for the Reading Program outcome areas.

These assessments were administered at a fixed point in time, at the end of the school year. This administration strategy is different than linking assessment to instructional events, such as the completion of instruction over a particular instructional segment--say a block. To summarize pupil performance by block (and outcome), a selective scoring algorithm was separately applied to the returned end-of-year assessments. The purpose of the algorithm was to simulate the results had the end-of-block assessments been administered enroute instead of at the end of the year. The procedure used is as follows. Assessments were scored only for those pupils whose end-of-year instruction was within the last two units of a block. Other pupils were ignored. Once these pupils were identified, they were scored only over those items pertaining to their end-of-year block of instruction. Other blocks covered by the particular assessment form were ignored. This procedure yielded one set of block-outcome scores for each such pupil. These pupil measures were then aggregated to the school level to create the data base for subsequent analyses.

Block Outcome Proficiency

Average proficiencies for the various reading outcomes by block are presented in Figures 3-5. The number of schools (ranging from 17 to 31) over which the estimates are tabulated is also presented.

Letter Names (block 1 only) shows a mean proficiency of 91% (Figure 3). For Storybook Words (Figure 3), the means show a tendancy to increase from block 1 (74%) through block 4 (96%). For blocks 5 through 7, the means are constant at 92%, and the mean for block 8 is 96%.

Proficiencies for Letter Sounds and Blending (blocks 1-4 only) and Vocabulary Extension (blocks 5-8 only) are presented on the same axis in Figure 4. For Letter Sounds and Blending they tend to increase across blocks, from 62% in block 1 to 90% in block 4. The average proficiencies for Vocabulary Extension begin from a relative low of 79% at block 5 and increase to a peak of 90% at block 7 while the mean for block 8 is 86%.

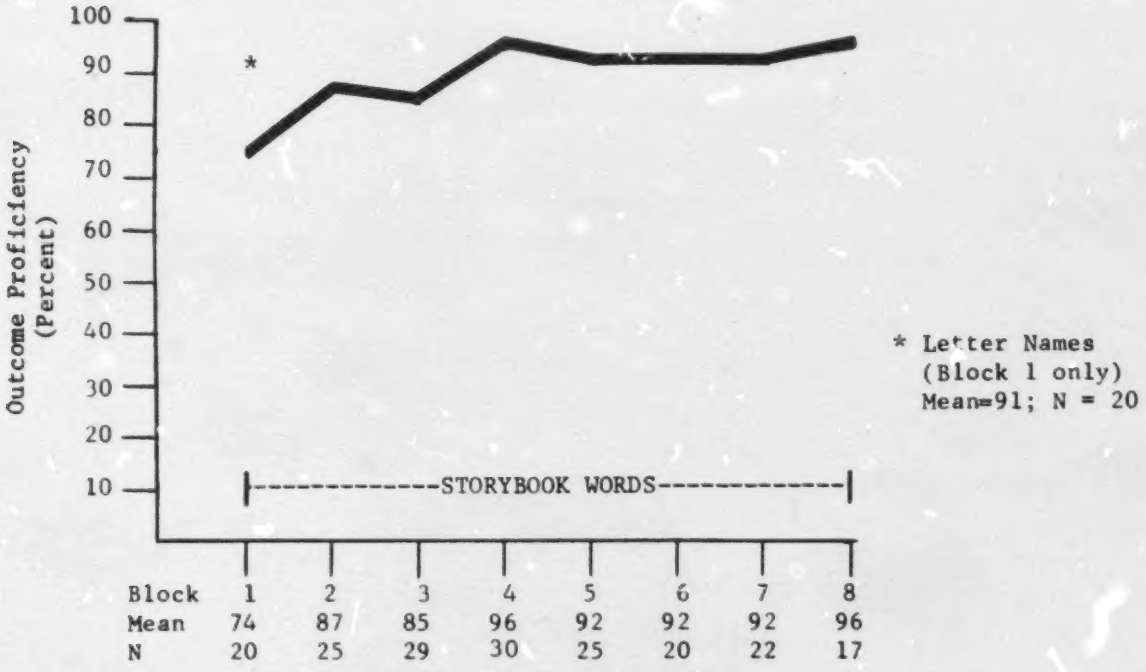


Figure 3. Average reading proficiency by outcome (Storybook Words; Letter Names) and block.

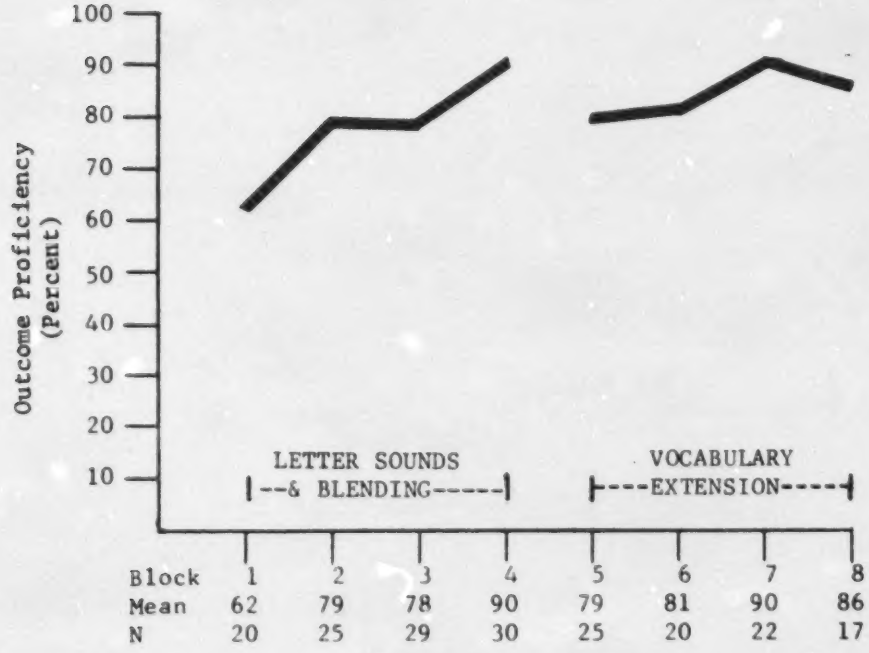


Figure 4. Average reading proficiency by outcome (Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocabulary Extension) and block.

Proficiencies for Sentence Comprehension (blocks 1-4 only) and Paragraph Comprehension (blocks 5-8 only) are presented on the same axis in Figure 5. For Sentence Comprehension they tend to increase by block, from 45% in block 1 to 79% in block 4. This pattern of increasing proficiency across blocks doesn't hold for Paragraph Comprehension. The highest proficiency for this outcome occurs in block 5 (85%) while the average for the last three blocks are fairly similar and within a 67% to 75% range.

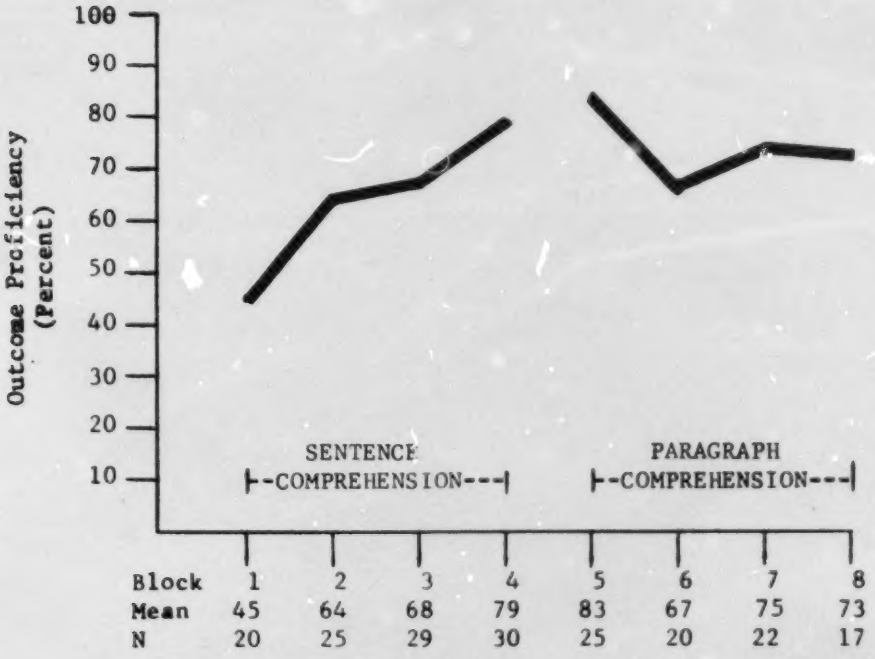


Figure 5. Average reading proficiency by outcome (Sentence Comprehension; Paragraph Comprehension) and block.

If the elevations are superimposed, the Storybook Word profile tends to be above the Letter Sounding and Blending and Vocabulary Extension profiles, which in turn tend to be above the Comprehension profile. This ordering reflects the expected relative difficulty of the learning tasks associated with each outcome. However, the effect may at least in part be a function of the simulation procedures underlying the analysis. For example, the average proficiencies in the early blocks (particularly block 1) of all outcomes but Letter Names, tend to be lower than those of subsequent blocks. But the end-of-block situation may be more difficult to simulate from a single end-of-year test at block 1 than at other blocks. Since the Reading Program in general is designed toward delivery of two blocks per year, terminating in block 1

at the close of the school year indicates a different usage. This fact, combined with kindergarten pupils' naivete relative to reading, item forms, and testing procedures could well account for the relatively lower proficiencies in the earliest block.

Outcome Proficiency by User Characteristics

Average outcome proficiency by blocks for four program duration categories--10-20 weeks, 21-25 weeks, 26-30 weeks, and greater than 30 weeks--is presented in Table 7. These data show little relationship between duration and end-of-block scores. Blocks are "completed" when acceptable proficiency is attained, and the number of "completed blocks," (but not the proficiency on those blocks) is contingent upon the program duration.

The average proficiency by ethnicity categories is also presented in Table 7. Though the N's are low for the Black and Spanish-surnamed categories, the general pattern reflects little relationship between ethnicity and end-of-block proficiency. And the same general picture emerges in Table 7 for the income level, national reading norm, and ESEA Title I eligibility categorizations. Pupil proficiency on the program outcomes appears independent of the user characteristics that have traditionally been associated with reading "disadvantages."

COMPOSITION PROGRAM

The context in which the Composition Program was used during the tryout differed slightly from that for Reading in that placement at the beginning of the year was on a level basis within each class. Guidelines referencing specific communication skills of pupils were provided to assist a teacher in determining the level of the program most appropriate for a class.

Level Outcome Proficiency

The level assessments were administered and corrected by the classroom teacher. Each was constructed to measure pre-specified Composition outcomes with the items stratified by instructional unit within a level. Two outcomes, Elements and Content/Planning were assessed in the different levels, although the operationalization of the outcomes was modified over levels.

At Level 1, Elements consisted of copying 20 selected numbers and lower and upper case letters and completing five sentences where the pupil chose one word from two to best complete the sentence. The correct choice involved choosing the most logical word and knowing beginning capitalization and punctuation. At Levels 2 through 4, the two outcomes, Elements and Content/Planning, were assessed in the content of a story

Table 7

Reading Proficiency by User Characteristics

Characteristic	Outcome		Blocks 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DURATION (Weeks)										
10-20 weeks	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%				90		90	90	74
		N				1		1	1	1
	Storybook Words	%				95		93	87	97
		N				1		1	1	1
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%				78		75	67	53
		N				1		1	1	1
21-25 weeks	Letter Names	%	96							
		N	1							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	56	70	74	90	70	79	93	90
		N	1	1	5	5	4	3	3	2
	Storybook Words	%	76	85	85	95	89	89	94	97
		N	1	1	5	5	4	3	3	2
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	38	40	65	75	88	56	75	80
		N	1	1	5	5	5	3	3	2
26-30 weeks	Letter Names	%	93							
		N	6							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	66	72	80	86	82	81	87	82
		N	6	8	9	9	8	5	5	3
	Storybook Words	%	74	84	84	96	94	92	93	93
		N	6	8	9	9	8	5	5	3
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	43	63	69	78	80	66	76	66
		N	6	8	3	9	8	5	5	3
Greater than 30 weeks	Letter Names	%	90							
		N	5							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	52	75	82	92	78	82	90	91
		N	5	7	7	7	8	5	4	5
	Storybook Words	%	66	84	85	96	92	93	94	97
		N	5	7	7	7	8	5	4	5
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	40	62	69	85	83	69	78	77
		N	5	7	7	7	8	5	4	5

Table 7 (cont'd)

Characteristic	Outcome		Blocks 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
ETHNICITY										
Black	Letter Names	%	87							
		N	3							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	48	63	80	91	80			
		N	3	3	3	3	3			
	Storybook Words	%	73	74	88	94	95			
		N	3	3	3	3	3			
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	46	51	65	83	88			
		N	3	3	3	3	3			
Spanish-surnamed	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%		55	71	91				
		N		1	1	1				
	Storybook Words	%		77	78	98				
		N		1	1	1				
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%		54	75	75				
		N		1	1	1				
Other	Letter Names	%	94							
		N	9							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	65	80	80	89	79	82	89	88
		N	9	12	17	18	17	14	13	11
	Storybook Words	%	72	87	84	96	92	92	92	97
		N	9	12	17	18	17	14	13	11
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	43	67	68	79	83	67	77	74
		N	9	12	17	18	17	14	13	11
INCOME LEVEL										
Less than $5,000	Letter Names	%	89							
		N	1							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	44	60	83	100	76			
		N	1	1	1	1	1			
	Storybook Words	%	70	71	90	100	96			
		N	1	1	1	1	1			
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	40	48	68	100	89			
		N	1	1	1	1	1			

Table 7 (cont'd)

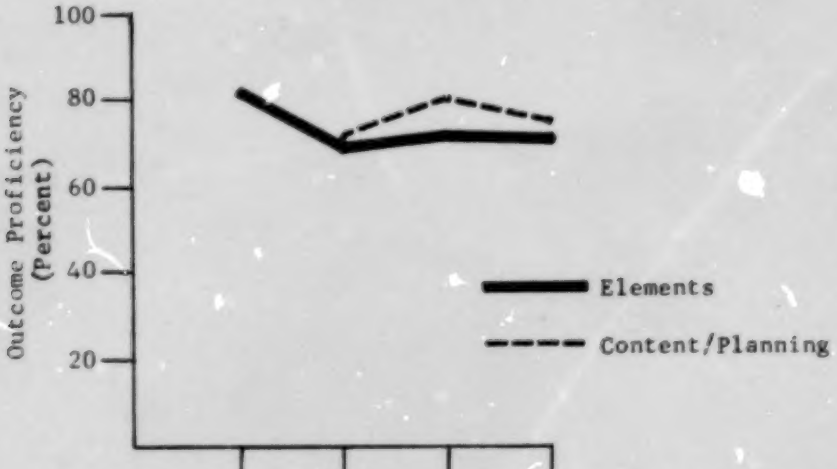
Characteristic	Outcome		Blocks 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
$5,000 - 8,000	Letter Names	%	87							
		N	3							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	55	65	79	83	79		77	84
		N	3	4	4	4	3		1	1
	Storybook Words	%	78	77	84	95	94		88	98
		N	3	4	4	4	3		1	1
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	50	57	67	76	82		69	75
		N	3	4	4	4	3		1	1
$8,000 - 12,000	Letter Names	%	94							
		N	5							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	59	74	78	87	78	79	87	85
		N	5	8	9	8	9	7	5	4
	Storybook Words	%	75	86	83	95	92	92	92	94
		N	5	8	9	8	9	7	5	4
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	52	60	69	76	79	67	74	63
		N	5	8	9	8	9	7	5	4
Greater than $12,000	Letter Names	%	96							
		N	4							
	Letter Sounds and Blending Vocab. Exten.	%	69	89	80	91	78	84	92	88
		N	4	4	8	10	8	8	8	7
	Storybook Words	%	65	91	85	96	92	93	94	97
		N	4	4	8	10	8	8	8	7
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	29	78	66	80	87	65	78	78
		N	4	4	8	10	8	8	8	7
READING NORM										
Below Norm	Letter Names	%	90							
		N	4							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	52	64	71	87	77	83	94	73
		N	4	5	6	6	4	1	2	1
	Storybook Words	%	73	80	82	95	92	93	96	89
		N	4	5	6	6	4	1	2	1
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	45	51	63	73	85	51	71	54
		N	4	5	6	6	4	1	2	1

Table 7 (cont'd)

Characteristic	Outcome		Blocks 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
At Norm	Letter Names	%	91							
		N	3							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	53	65	84	87	70	84	83	85
		N	3	2	4	3	5	3	3	5
	Storybook Words	%	79	78	88	98	91	93	90	96
		N	3	2	4	3	5	3	3	2
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	47	59	72	86	79	61	70	73
		N	3	2	4	3	5	3	3	2
Above Norm	Letter Names	%	95							
		N	6							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	69	85	82	90	82	81	91	89
		N	6	8	12	14	12	11	9	9
	Storybook Words	%	68	82	85	96	93	92	93	97
		N	6	8	12	14	12	11	9	9
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	40	72	69	80	84	69	79	74
		N	6	8	12	14	12	11	9	9
ESEA TITLE I ELIGIBILITY										
Yes	Letter Names	%	88							
		N	4							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	49	62	77	90	77	83	98	73
		N	4	5	6	6	4	1	1	1
	Storybook Words	%	72	77	86	96	94	93	99	89
		N	4	5	6	6	4	1	1	1
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	45	53	65	80	86	51	67	54
		N	4	5	6	6	4	1	1	1
No	Letter Names	%	94							
		N	9							
	Letter Sounds and Blending; Vocab. Exten.	%	65	80	80	88	79	82	89	88
		N	9	12	16	17	17	14	13	11
	Storybook Words	%	72	87	84	96	92	92	92	97
		N	9	12	16	17	17	14	13	11
	Sentence Compreh.; Paragraph Compreh.	%	43	67	69	79	83	67	77	74
		N	9	12	16	17	17	14	13	11

that pupils composed after looking at either a picture or a series of pictures. The pupil productions were rated by the teacher in each outcome area according to criteria supplied with the Composition assessment materials. In all cases, the assessment instruments were composed of new items, but used item forms that were congruent with those used in instruction and in the program's Criterion Exercises.

Proficiency indicators for the various composition outcomes by level are presented in Figure 6. There was very little variability in proficiency across either levels or outcomes reflected by the assessments. The proficiency data indicate high overall performance on both outcomes over all levels of instruction.



Level		1	2	3	4
Elements	%	82	69	72	71
	N	34	34	61	52
Content/	%	--	72	80	76
Planning	N	--	87	57	52

Figure 6. Mean Composition proficiency by outcome (Elements; Content/Planning) and block.

Outcome Proficiency by User Characteristics

Table 8 presents the distribution of Composition outcome performance by program duration, ethnic group, income level, reading test history categories, and ESEA Title I eligibility. As with the Reading Program, the results of the analysis are simply stated: there appears to be no relationship of practical significance between those characteristics and pupil outcome performance.

Table 8

Composition Outcome Proficiency by
User Characteristics

Characteristic	Outcome		Levels 1	2	3	4
DURATION						
10-20 weeks	Elements	%	73	86	75	
		N	5	2	2	
	Content/ Planning	%		74	84	
		N		2	1	
21-25 weeks	Elements	%	70	66	82	65
		N	6	4	3	2
	Content/ Planning	%		82	89	70
		N		4	3	2
26-30 weeks	Elements	%	76	72	72	75
		N	7	5	3	21
	Content/ Planning	%		69	86	80
		N		5	3	21
Greater than 30 weeks	Elements	%	73		77	80
		N	9		9	4
	Content/ Planning	%			84	81
		N			9	4
ETHNICITY						
Black	Elements	%	75	62	79	
		N	3	2	2	
	Content/ Planning	%		67	85	
		N		2	2	
Spanish-surnamed	Elements	%	84	71		
		N	3	3		
	Content/ Planning	%		73		
		N		3		

Table 8 (cont'd)

Characteristic	Outcome		Levels 1	2	3	4
Other	Elements	%	72	72	76	75
		N	15	5	8	8
	Content/ Planning	%		86	86	76
		N		5	7	8
INCOME LEVELS						
Less than $5,000	Elements	%	76	77		
		N	4	4		
	Content/ Planning	%		78		
		N		1		
$5,000 - 8,000	Elements	%	75	61	79	75
		N	8	12	8	4
	Content/ Planning	%		67	85	81
		N		3	8	4
$8,000 - 12,000	Elements	%	76	72	80	75
		N	22	24	29	17
	Content/ Planning	%		80	86	79
		N		6	25	17
Greater than $12,000	Elements	%	65	67	60	73
		N	8	4	4	12
	Content/ Planning	%		100	88	76
		N		1	4	12
READING NORM						
Below Norm	Elements	%	78	66	78	72
		N	9	6	3	2
	Content/ Planning	%		72	88	84
		N		6	3	2

Table 8 (cont'd)

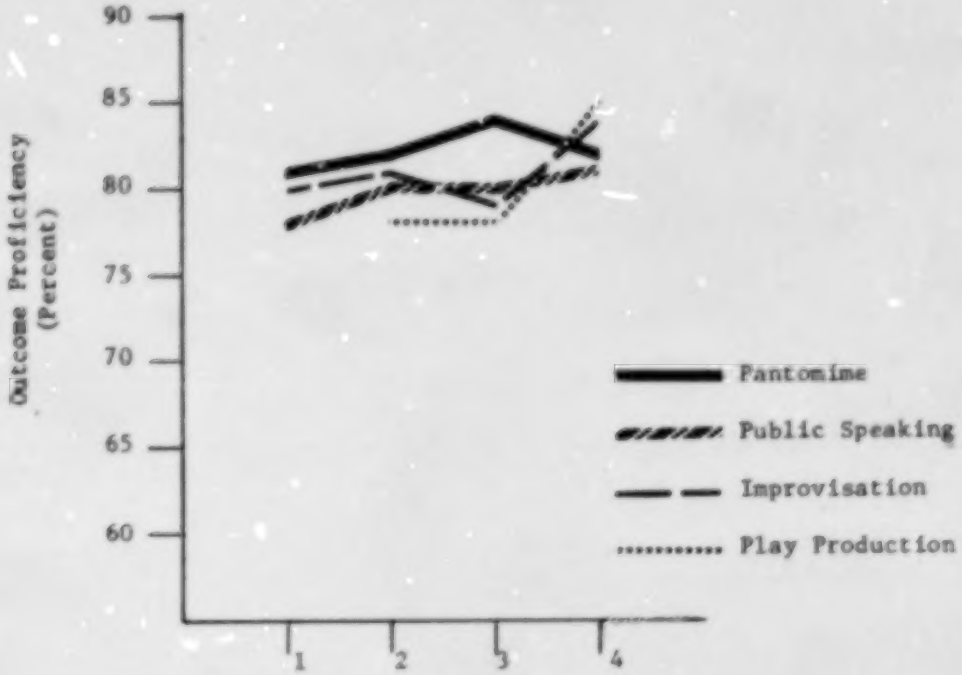
Characteristic	Outcome		Levels 1	2	3	4
At Norm	Elements	%	75	73	79	68
		N	5	2	3	2
	Content/ Planning	%		79	83	69
		N		2	3	2
Above Norm	Elements	%	68	71	74	78
		N	8	3	3	5
	Content/ Planning	%		91	87	79
		N		3	4	5
ESEA TITLE I ELIGIBILITY						
Yes	Elements	%	78	71	76	74
		N	14	6	8	9
	Content/ Planning	%	67	85	86	78
		N	16	6	7	9
No	Elements	%	85	66	79	
		N	6	5	2	
	Content/ Planning	%	73	71	85	
		N	6	5	2	

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The inquiry architecture for the Expressive Language Program paralleled that for Composition with respect to level structure, pupil placement, and assessment structure.

Level Outcome Proficiency

The four levels of the Program were assessed by an end-of-year assessment of pupils' proficiency in each of four outcome areas: Pantomime, Public Speaking, Improvisation, and Play Production (levels 2-4 only). The assessment "items" involved short activities representative of those included in instruction. With a 1 to 4 scale, teachers rated pupils on their performance of activities defined by these outcomes. As shown in Figure 7, outcome proficiency over levels was uniformly high over both levels and outcome areas.



		1	2	3	4
Pantomime	%	81	82	84	82
	N	19	22	28	20
Public Speaking	%	78	80	80	81
	N	38	44	42	30
Improvisation	%	80	81	79	84
	N	38	44	42	30
Play Production	%	--	78	78	85
	N	--	22	28	30

Figure 7. Mean Expressive Language proficiency by outcome (Pantomime; Public Speaking; Improvisation; Play Production) and block.

Outcome Proficiency by User Characteristics

Since the data involve ratings of pupil performance by teachers, the interpretation of the cross-classifications as presented in Table 9 is inherently confounded with any differences among raters that may have been operative.

There does appear to be interaction between ethnic categories and performance, with Black and Spanish-surnamed pupils consistently being rated lower than pupils in other schools. The present data are insufficient to sort out the relative contribution of pupils, teachers, program, and error to the ethnicity-by-performance variability. However, the variability in the patterns of differences across levels and outcome areas suggest that determinants other than pupils or program characteristics are likely involved if the interaction is any more than an artifact of the small number of schools representing the various data points.

In none of the other cross-classifications is there a practically significant relationship between the classification variables and pupil proficiency. The tendency to place ethnic minority and low income pupils in early rather than later levels of the Program is evident. As with the Reading Program, there are indications that under-placement may be particularly pronounced in situations conventionally characterized as "disadvantaged."

SUMMARY

The Quality Assurance information for the 1973-74 academic year reflects uniformly high pupil proficiency on the outcomes of the Communication Skills Programs for which instruction was received. The tryout population was both large quantitatively and diverse qualitatively. The pattern of high proficiency was achieved both within program blocks or levels and across program outcomes. Although placement of pupils in the ordered levels did show indications of being influenced by biosocial characteristics, pupil performance in the program appeared robust against pupil and school characteristics popularly believed to make for instructional "disadvantage." Moreover, the pattern of high proficiency was also insensitive to the duration of program use during the year. The topography of the proficiency patterns across outcome areas and programs was congruent with the architecture of programs; the differences in "difficulty" were readily interpretable in terms of the instructional structure and need not be explained in terms of biosocial characteristics beyond the scope of schooling.

The 1973-74 tryout also provided a useful vehicle for the initial use of a pupil placement and assessment indicator strategy that will be incorporated into further development of the Quality Assurance Information Service for the Communication Skills Programs.

Table 9

Expressive Language Proficiency by User Characteristics

Characteristic	Outcome		Level 1	2	3	4
DURATION						
10-20 weeks	Pantomime	%	86	76	82	
		N	1	1	1	
	Public Speaking	%	84	76	81	
		N	1	1	1	
	Improvisation	%	80	75	80	
		N	1	1	1	
	Play Production	%		78	81	
		N		1	1	
21-25 weeks	Pantomime	%	89	81	89	86
		N	3	5	2	3
	Public Speaking	%	84	78	88	85
		N	3	5	2	3
	Improvisation	%	81	79	88	89
		N	3	5	2	3
	Play Production	%		71	87	89
		N		5	2	3
26-30 weeks	Pantomime	%	74	84	84	87
		N	6	7	5	2
	Public Speaking	%	72	81	79	86
		N	6	7	5	2
	Improvisation	%	73	82	79	90
		N	6	7	5	2
	Play Production	%		82	78	93
		N		7	5	2
Greater than 30 weeks	Pantomime	%	66	88	91	85
		N	2	2	1	3
	Public Speaking	%	70	87	89	83
		N	2	2	1	2
	Improvisation	%	73	88	84	86
		N	2	2	1	2
	Play Production	%		84	92	86
		N		2	1	2

Table 9 (cont'd)

Characteristic	Outcome		Level 1	2	3	4
ETHNICITY						
Black	Pantomime	%	68	90	80	
		N	3	3	2	
	Public Speaking	%	70	86	77	
		N	3	3	2	
	Improvisation	%	71	84	76	
		N	3	3	2	
	Play Production	%		86	77	
		N		3	2	
Spanish-surnamed	Pantomime	%	86	66	69	
		N	1	1	1	
	Public Speaking	%	83	69	63	
		N	1	1	1	
	Improvisation	%	84	67	61	
		N	1	1	1	
	Play Production	%		73	60	
		N		1	1	
Other	Pantomime	%	81	83	90	86
		N	10	10	6	7
	Public Speaking	%	78	80	88	86
		N	10	10	6	7
	Improvisation	%	78	82	87	88
		N	10	10	6	5
	Play Production	%		76	87	89
		N		10	6	7
INCOME LEVEL						
Less than $5,000	Pantomime	%	81	95		
		N	3	1		
	Public Speaking	%	84	96		
		N	6	2		
	Improvisation	%	81	93		
		N	6	2		
	Play Production	%		95		
		N		1		

Table 9 (cont'd)

Characteristic	Outcome		Level 1	2	3	4
$5,000 - 8,000	Pantomime	%	76	85	80	
		N	3	4	4	
	Public Speaking	%	75	80	77	
		N	6	8	6	
	Improvisation	%	76	77	76	
		N	6	8	6	
	Play Production	%		81	77	
		N		4	4	
$8,000 - 12,000	Pantomime	%	84	83	81	86
		N	3	5	6	8
	Public Speaking	%	81	84	78	83
		N	6	10	9	12
	Improvisation	%	82	85	75	87
		N	6	10	9	12
	Play Production	%		81	78	88
		N		5	6	12
Greater than $12,000	Pantomime	%	75	80	92	88
		N	5	5	8	6
	Public Speaking	%	70	75	89	87
		N	10	10	12	9
	Improvisation	%	71	78	90	90
		N	10	10	12	9
	Play Production	%		70	88	91
		N		5	8	9
READING NORM						
Below Norm	Pantomime	%	73	84	77	93
		N	4	5	3	1
	Public Speaking	%	72	81	72	95
		N	4	5	3	1
	Improvisation	%	72	79	71	98
		N	4	5	3	1
	Play Production	%		81	71	99
		N		5	3	1

Table 9 (cont'd)

Characteristic	Outcome		1	2	3	4
At Norm	Pantomime	%	75	91	99	78
		N	3	4	1	2
	Public Speaking	%	76	89	98	75
		N	3	4	1	2
	Improvisation	%	77	90	99	79
		N	3	4	1	2
	Play Production	%		78	96	79
		N		4	1	2
Above Norm	Pantomime	%	80	77	87	88
		N	5	6	5	4
	Public Speaking	%	75	75	85	88
		N	5	6	5	4
	Improvisation	%	74	77	85	91
		N	5	6	5	4
	Play Production	%		76	86	92
		N		6	5	4
ESEA TITLE I ELIGIBILITY						
Yes	Pantomime	%	73	84	77	
		N	4	4	3	
	Public Speaking	%	73	82	72	
		N	4	4	3	
	Improvisation	%	73	80	71	
		N	4	4	3	
	Play Production	%		83	71	
		N		4	3	
No	Pantomime	%	81	83	90	86
		N	10	11	6	7
	Public Speaking	%	78	80	88	85
		N	10	11	6	7
	Improvisation	%	78	82	87	88
		N	10	11	6	7
	Play Production	%		77	87	90
		N		11	6	7